

REMARKS

Claims 5-9 remain in this application, while claims 1-4 were previously canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Independent claim 5 is rejected, along with dependent claims 8 and 9, as anticipated by newly cited U.S. Patent 4,115,467 to Fowler. Reconsideration is requested. Nothing suggests that the Fowler steam reforming stage 32 (identified in the Office Action as a "steam reformer" by the Examiner) is downstream of the CO shift reaction stage 38 (identified in the Office Action as an "adiabatic, catalytic after-treatment stage"), or that product gas with a minimized oxygen content is fed to the steam reforming stage 32 from the reaction stage 38 as currently amended claim 5 requires. It follows, therefore, that claim as it appears above is not anticipated by the Fowler patent.

U.S. Patent 6,620,536 to Strobel et al., relied on as a secondary reference to reject claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), does not suggest modifying the Fowler production plant so as to meet the limitations in claim 5 discussed above, and it is respectfully submitted that claim 5 is patentable. The rest of the claims remaining in this application depend on claim 5 and are patentable as well.

This application will be allowable after entry of this amendment for reasons discussed above, and entry of the amendment is again respectfully requested.

Application No. 09/934,695

Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this amendment, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,



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